

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed June 25, 2003 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-7 and 32-35 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-7 stand rejected. Claims 32-35 have been added. Claims 8-31 have been cancelled. No additional fees are due for newly added Claims 32-35.

The rejection of Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirata (U.S. Patent No. 4,063,054) is respectfully traversed.

Hirata describes a key switch equipped with a contact piece. The contact piece is pressed down by a key top (13) actuated by an external force (such as a finger) thereby closing an electric circuit. A key top (13) is included with a downwardly extending protruding part (14) on the bottom thereof, and engages an elastic element, for example a coil spring (15), that surrounds protruding part (14). The remainder of key top (13) is coupled to a central portion (17) of a first plate spring member (16). A peripheral portion (19) of member (16) is placed on an insulating spacer (20). When key top (13) is depressed, protruding portion (14) enters an opening formed in central portion (17) and depresses a central portion (23) of a second plate spring member (22). Spacer (20) limits an amount of travel of spring member (16).

Claim 1 recites a method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor, the lighting contactor including the moving contact and a contact carrier, wherein the method includes the steps of "providing a hollow spacer; providing a biasing member; positioning the biasing member within the spacer such that the spacer extends only around the biasing member, the spacer configured to move along a length of the biasing member when the biasing member is stationary; and installing the biasing member and the spacer in the contact carrier"

Hirata neither describes nor suggests a method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor, the lighting contactor including the moving contact and a contact carrier, the method including the steps of providing a hollow spacer, providing a biasing member, positioning the biasing member within the spacer such that the spacer extends only around the biasing member, the spacer configured to move along a length of the

biasing member when the biasing member is stationary, and installing the biasing member and the spacer in the contact carrier.

Rather, Hirata describes a key top 13 engaging a coil spring 15 when an external force is applied to key top 13. Hirata does not describe nor suggest that the key top 13 moves along a length of the coil spring 15 when the coil spring 15 is stationary. Hirata states in col. 2, lines 51-58, "Referring to FIG. 2 showing a lateral cross section of an embodiment of the key switch of the present invention shown in FIG. 1, 13 indicates a key top which is to receive an external force by means for example of a finger, and which is provided with a downwardly extending protruding part 14 on the bottom thereof. Said bottom of key top 13 engages with an elastic element, for example a coil spring 15..."

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that the Section 102(b) rejection of presently pending Claims 1-7 is not a proper rejection. As explained by the Federal Circuit, to satisfy the requirements of Section 102(b), which is generally referred to as "anticipation", each and every element of the claimed invention must be disclosed in a single prior art reference or embodied in a single prior art device. Verdegaal Brothers Inc. v. Union Oil Company of California, 2 U.S.P.Q.2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

Hirata neither describes nor suggests a method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor, the lighting contactor including the moving contact and a contact carrier, the method including the step of installing the biasing member and the spacer in the contact carrier. Rather, Hirata describes a key switch for use with a calculator.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Hirata.

Claims 2-7 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-7 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-7 likewise are patentable over Hirata.

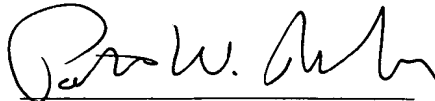
For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1-7 be withdrawn.

With respect to newly added Claims 32-35, Claims 32-35 each include a recitation regarding the spacer configured to move along a length of the biasing member when the biasing member is stationary. Hirata neither describes nor suggests a spacer configured to

move along a length of the biasing member when the biasing member is stationary. For at least the reasons set forth above, Claims 32-35 are submitted to be patentable over Hirata.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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